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FM AMEMBASSY OTTAWA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3835

C O N F I D E N T I A L OTTAWA 2006

E.O. 11652: GDS

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SUBJECT: FEDERAL ELECTION CAMPAIGN

1. SUMMARY. FEDERAL ELECTION CAMPAIGN--THUS FAR AN INCONCLUSIVE AFFAIR--HAS NOW SUPPOSEDLY MOVED INTO HIGH GEAR, AND WILL REMAIN SO UNTIL JULY 8. DESPITE FLOOD OF PAID TV AND RADIO SPOTS, AND INCREASINGLY FRENETIC TRAVEL BY PARTY LEADERS, CAMPAIGNS HAVE NOT PRODUCED ANY DISCERNIBLE TRENDS, WITH OUTCOME REMAINING OBSCURE. EMBASSY HAS HAD USEFUL HALF-TIME SUMMATIONS FROM CONSULATES GENERAL, AND HAS BEEN IN TOUCH WITH CAMPAIGN LEADERSHIP OF THREE MAJOR PARTIES. PARTY ORGANIZERS HAVE EXPRESSED THE OPTIMISM EXPECTED AND REQUIRED OF THEM, BUT FROM CONSULATE AND PRESS ANALYSIS WE BELIEVE PARTIES ARE AS UNCERTAIN AS WE ARE. BEST ESTIMATE PRESENTLY IS THAT BOTH LIBERALS AND CONSERVATIVES WILL INCREASE PARLIAMENTARY REPRESENTATION SLIGHTLY AT EXPENSE OF NDP AND SOCIAL CREDIT. (STANDING AT DISSOLUTION WAS LIBERAL 109, CONSERVATIVE 106, NDP 31, SOCIAL CREDIT 15, INDEPENDENT 1, VACANT 2.) THIS SUGGESTS ANOTHER MINORITY GOVERNMENT, BUT QUESTION OF WHO WILL FORM IT IS STILL ANYBODY'S GUESS. GALLUP POLL PUBLISHED JUNE 22 AND TAKEN AFTER THE RECENT

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RISE IN THE COST-OF-LIVING REVEALED THE CANADIAN

ELECTORATE RELATIVELY UNCHANGED (LIBERALS 42 PERCENT; CONSERVATIVE 34 PERCENT; NDP 18 PERCENT; OTHER 6 PERCENT). THE MAJOR CHANGE COMES IN A DRAMATIC DROP IN THE UN-DECIDED GROUP, FROM 33 PERCENT EARLY IN MAY DOWN TO 14 PERCENT ON JUNE 22 (SEPTTEL). RELATIONS WITH THE US HAVE NOT SURFACED AS CAMPAIGN ISSUE OF EVEN MINOR IMPORTANCE. HOWEVER, REPORTED THREAT BY AGRICULTURE DEPARTMENT OF RETALIATION AGAINST CANADA FOR NOT ALLOWING IMPORTATION OF US BEEF UNLESS IT IS CERTIFIED BY USG TO BE FREE OF DES HORMONES, COULD CHANGE THIS UP-TO-NOW HAPPY SITUATION. END SUMMARY.

2. ISSUES. THE CONTINUED HIGH RATE OF INFLATION AND COST-OF-LIVING REMAIN THE MOST IMPORTANT ISSUES IN THESE ELECTIONS, WITH THE AUXILIARY QUESTION: WHO IS BEST QUALIFIED TO MANAGE THE ECONOMY? TRUDEAU OR STANFIELD. THE CONSERVATIVE PROMISE TO LIMIT INFLATION WOULD APPEAR TO GIVE THEM AN ADVANTAGE, BUT STANFIELD'S WAGE AND PRICE FREEZE PROPOSAL HAS BEEN DERIDED BY OTHER PARTIES; EVEN SOME TORY CANDIDATES HAVE BEEN RELUCTANT TO ENDORSE IT, AND MORE IMPORTANT--THE ELECTORATE SEEMS SKEPTICAL. IN THE ABSENCE OF OTHER MAJOR ISSUES ON WHICH THE PARTIES CAN DIVIDE, THE ELECTORAL CONFRONTATION IS INCREASINGLY A PERSONAL ONE. BUT TRUDEAU HAS NOT RECAPTURED THE CHARISMA OF 1968, PC LEADER STANFIELD NEVER HAD MUCH, AND NDP LEADER LEWIS IS LESS EFFECTIVE FOLLOWING HIS LONG ALLIANCE WITH THE LIBERALS THAN HE WAS IN OUTRIGHT OPPOSITION. DESPITE THEIR EFFORTS, NONE HAS APPEARED TO CAPTURE THE PUBLIC IMAGINATION.

3. LIBERALS. PRIMIN TRUDEAU IS FULFILLING HIS PROMISE OF A FIGHTING CAMPAIGN, CRISSCROSSING THE COUNTRY AND MAKING CONTACT WITH SMALL GROUPS AS WELL AS ADDRESSING LARGER AUDIENCES. HE HAS BEEN EFFECTIVE IN CRITICIZING THE CONSERVATIVE PROMISE TO INSTITUTE WAGE AND PRICE CONTROLS; HE HAS MADE PROPOSALS TO HELP LOWER-INCOME FAMILIES BUY HOUSES, AND TO IMPROVE RAIL TRAVEL, BOTH OF WHICH SEEMED TO BE HASTILY THOUGHT UP AND WITHOUT ELABORATION. TRUDEAU'S MAJOR ACHIEVEMENT SO FAR IS IN GETTING HEADLINES, MANY OF THEM GENERATED BY MRS. TRUDEAU. HOW EFFECTIVE THE NEW
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TRUDEAU STYLE IS WE CANNOT TELL. POLLS SHOW HIM PERSONALLY WELL AHEAD OF STANFIELD WERE ELECTION FOR PRIME MINISTER. BUT, AS NDP SECRETARY SCOTTON TOLD POLCOUNSELOR (OTTAWA 1933), THIS ELECTION IS BEING FOUGHT ON RIDING BY RIDING BASIS. AFTER SIX YEARS IN OFFICE TRUDEAU IS A FAMILIAR FIGURE--NO LONGER AS FASCINATING TO MOST CANADIANS AS IN 1968, HOWEVER HARD HE TRIES--BUT PROBABLY MORE ATTRACTIVE THAN HE WAS IN

1972.

4. CONSERVATIVES. THE TORY CAMPAIGN STARTED BADLY. STANFIELD FOUND HIMSELF ON THE DEFENSIVE OVER HIS PROPOSAL FOR A WAGE AND PRICE FREEZE, AND FINALLY REFUSED TO ELABORATE IT FURTHER. HE WAS EMBARRASSED WHEN THE PC CONVENTION IN MONCTON, N.B., NOMINATED MAYOR JONES, AN OPPONENT OF BILINGUALISM, AND STANFIELD HAD TO VETO HIS CANDIDACY. STANFIELD'S ADVISERS NOW BELIEVE THINGS ARE ON THE MEND. TORIES HAVE PRODUCED SEVERAL NEW AND ATTRACTIVE CANDIDATES, AMONG THEM NEWSCASTER RON COLLISTER, AND ARE WELL ORGANIZED AND FINANCED. THEY ARE NOT DISMAYED BY LATEST POLL SHOWING LIBERALS AHEAD NATIONALLY BY AS MUCH AS 42 TO 34 PERCENT. THEY POINT TO LARGE NUMBERS OF UNDECIDED VOTERS, WHO THEY BELIEVE TRADITIONALLY TEND TO VOTE CONSERVATIVE, TO FACT THAT AT SIMILAR POINT IN 1972 CAMPAIGN POLLS SHOWED PC STILL FURTHER BEHIND, AND TO WEIGHTED NATURE OF POLLS DUE TO LIBERAL OVERKILL IN QUEBEC. MALCOLM WICKSON, PC CAMPAIGN CHARIMAN, TOLD EMBOFF HE BELIEVED TORIES WERE DOING BETTER THAN IN 1972 IN ALMOST EVERY PROVINCE, AND PARTICULARLY IN BC AND ONTARIO.

5. NDP. DAVID LEWIS HAS NOT BEEN AS EFFECTIVE AS IN 1972 WHEN HIS ASSAULT ON "CORPORATE RIP-OFF" WAS SO SUCCESSFUL. AS SEVERAL NDP MEMBERS OF COMMONS PRE-DICTED, NDP IS TO SOME EXTENT TRAPPED BY ITS SUPPORT OF TRUDEAU GOVERNMENT IN 1973-74. LEWIS HAS JOINED IN REJECTING THE CONSERVATIVE WAGE-PRICE PROPOSALS, BUT HIS OWN PROPOSALS HAVE NOT BEEN WELL RECEIVED. NDP HAS NO POSSIBILITY OF FORMING GOVERNMENT, AND PROMISES OF WHAT THE PARTY WOULD DO IN POWER ARE NOT EFFECTIVE. NO ONE EXPECTS MAJOR SHIFTS IN THIS
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ELECTION, BUT IN CLOSE CONTESTS, NDP MAY BE AT A DISADVANTAGE.

6. BUTZ THREAT. AGRICULTURE SECRETARY BUTZ'S THREAT TO TAKE RETALIATORY ACTION AGAINST CANADIAN FARM EXPORTS TO US UNLESS CANADA PERMITS RESUMPTION OF US BEEF IMPORTS WAS BANNER HEADLINED THROUGHOUT CANADA. TRANSFERRING THIS NEGOTIATION INTO THE PUBLIC ARENA PUTS PRIMIN TRUDEAU IN A DIFFICULT SPOT MAKING IT MORE, RATHER THAN LESS, DIFFICULT FOR GOC TO COME TO AN ACCOMMODATION WITH US ON THIS ISSUE. THE QUESTION OF US BEEF ENTERING CANADA CONTAINING THE DES ADDITIVE (WHICH THE US FDA SAYS MAY CAUSE CANCER) IS OBVIOUSLY NOT THE KIND OF QUESTION ANY POLITICAL CANDIDATE APPRECIATES HAVING RAISED IN THE CLOSING WEEKS OF A HOTLY CONTESTED AND VERY CLOSE

NATIONAL ELECTION.

7. THIS ELECTION, LIKE MANY OTHERS IN CANADA, SEEMS LIKELY TO BE WON OR LOST FOR REGIONAL RATHER THAN POLITICAL REASONS. EMBASSY OFFERS FOLLOWING SUMMARY ON REGIONAL BASIS, BASED LARGELY ON CONSULATE GENERAL REPORTING.

BRITISH COLUMBIA. CANCOUVER REPORTS THAT NDP MIGHT LOSE 4 OR 5 OF ITS 11 B.C. SEATS. THIS IS IN CONTRAST WITH NDP FEDERAL SECRETARY SCOTTON, WHO TOLD EMBASSY HE THOUGHT NDP WOULD MAINTAIN OR EVEN GAIN STRENGTH IN B.C. EMBASSY INCLINED AGREE WITH VANCOUVER, AND THIS VIEW REINFORCED BY CONVERSATION WITH PC LEADER STANFIELD'S CAMPAIGN MANAGER FINLAY MACDONALD. MACDONALD BELIEVES NDP COULD LOSE 6 BC SEATS, AND TORIES HOPE TO INCREASE BC REPRESENTATION BY AT LEAST THAT MUCH (INCLUDING SEAT HELD BY ENVIRONMENT MINISTER DAVIS).

PRAIRIES. ALBERTA, SASKATCHEWAN AND MANITOBA ARE APPARENTLY IMMUNE TO ELECTION FEVER, AND LITTLE OR NO CHANGE IS EXPECTED THERE. WINNIPEG REPORTS THAT DEFENSE MINISTER RICHARDSON COULD BE OUSTED BY A STRONG TORY CANDIDATE, BUT CHANGES IN PRAIRIE REPRESENTATION LIKELY INVOLVE NO MORE THAN TWO OR THREE RIDINGS.

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ATLANTIC PROVINCES. CONSERVATIVES WILL CONTINUE TO HOLD SOLID MAJORITY FROM THE EAST, BUT LIBERALS MAY WIN TWO OR THREE MORE SEATS. NDP, PRESENTLY HOLDING NO FEDERAL SEATS EAST OF ONTARIO, IS APPARENTLY FAVORED TO TAKE ONE RIDING IN CAPE BRETON, NOVA SCOTIA. PC MAY LOSE IN MONCTON, NEW BRUNSWICK, WHEN MAYOR JONES IS RUNNING AS AN INDEPENDENT.

QUEBEC. REAL CAQUETTE'S SOCIAL CREDIT PARTY HOLDS 15 QUEBEC RIDINGS, AND ITS DEMISE HAS BEEN CONFIDENTLY PREDICTED FOR YEARS. WHILE SUCH PREDICTIONS ARE STILL RISKY, CAQUETTE'S HEALTH IS POOR, HIS PARTY APPEARS INCREASINGLY IRRELEVANT, AND MANY OBSERVERS BELIEVE THE SOCREDs COULD LOSE AS MUCH AS HALF THEIR STRENGTH, PRESUMABLY TO LIBERALS, WHO NOW HOLD 56 OF QUEBEC'S 74 SEATS. LIBERAL GAINS MIGHT BE OFFSET IF PC CAN WIN IN ENGLISH-SPEAKING PARTS OF QUEBEC, WHERE PREMIER BOURASSA'S LANGUAGE BILL HAS BEEN ILL RECEIVED. STANFIELD'S OFFICE HAS TOLD US OF HIS HOPE FOR AS MANY AS 15 QUEBEC SEATS, BUT THIS IS PROBABLY NO MORE THAN A HOPE.

ONTARIO THUS CONTINUES TO REMAIN THE KEY FOR THE TWO LARGER PARTIES AND THE NDP AS WELL. THERE ARE CLOSE THREE-WAY CONTESTS IN MANY OF THE 88 ONTARIO RIDINGS, AND PARTY LEADERS WILL SPEND MUCH OF THE NEXT TWO WEEKS THERE. SEVERAL CABINET MINISTERS, INCLUDING EXTAFF MINISTER SHARP, ENERGY MINISTER MACDONALD, AND TRADE AND COMMERCE MINISTER GILLESPIE ARE FACING STIFF COMPETITION. LIBERAL SOURCES TELL US THEY ARE DOING WELL IN RURAL AREAS, HELPED BY FARM POLICIES OF AGRICULTURE MINISTER WHELAN, BUT ADMIT THEY CANNOT PREDICT OUTCOME IN LARGE URBAN SECTORS. CONSERVATIVES AND NDP ALSO CLAIM SOME PROGRESS IN ONTARIO. THE ONLY SURE PREDICTION IS THAT THEY CANNOT ALL BE RIGHT.
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